

May 15 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1997

be on violent juvenile crime, we also must ensure a safer environment and positive opportunities and role models for our children in the most vulnerable communities.

Statistics show that half of juvenile crime at least occurs in the 3 hours after school is closed and before the parents come home. My bill will help to launch 1,000 after-school initiatives. Who can be against allowing a child to stay in school instead of on a street corner? Who can be against teachers as children's role models instead of thugs? Who can be against adults to supervise children instead of a lawless world of gangs to guide them?

Finally, we know we must cut off young people's access to guns that can cut off their lives. And I believe someone who commits a violent crime at 17 should not be able to turn around and buy a gun for a birthday present at 21. I want a juvenile crime bill to extend the Brady bill to violent juvenile offenders.

I also believe that these guns should be sold with child safety locks. We protect aspirin bottles in this country better than we protect guns from accidents by children.

In March, I directed Federal agencies to provide their agents with such child safety devices, and I'm pleased to say that today every FBI and ATF agent has a child safety lock. By October 15th, every agent from the DEA to the U.S. Marshal to the Border Patrol to the Park Police will have one, as well. If a child safety lock is good enough for law enforcement, it ought to be even better for the general public.

In the last 4 years we have proved that we can work together and learn from each other and that when we do, we can restore hope and improve safety in our communities. Now we have a chance to build on that progress by passing a smart, balanced juvenile justice bill that

does more than talk tough. The American people deserve that. A juvenile crime bill that doesn't crack down on guns and gangs, that doesn't guarantee more prosecutors, probation officers, and after-school hours is a crime bill in name only.

Today I ask the Members of the Congress to work with me, without regard to party, to pass a juvenile crime bill that will help us to work toward year-in and year-out fewer and fewer people to honor here, until there is no one new to add to the wall.

To the family members of the victims who are here, I know and I must say again that nothing we can do or say can bring them back or ease your sorrow. Only God and the time and comfort you give to each other can do that. But I ask you this: to know that the cause in which your loved ones died, right against wrong, law against lawlessness, hope against fear, is a worthy and noble cause. And because of their efforts and the efforts of others who wear our uniforms, it has now become a winning cause.

It is our job, those of us who remain, to make sure that we press on and on and on until such tragedies are a stunning exception, not a numbing statistic. As we go forward into that future, that is our most solemn obligation to you.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:30 p.m. on the West Grounds of at the Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Gil Gallegos, president, and Karen Lippe, auxiliary president, Fraternal Order of Police; Thomas Motolla, president and chief operating officer, Sony Music Entertainment; and entertainer Gloria Estefan. The Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week proclamation of May 7 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Security Strategy

May 15, 1997

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 603 of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, I am transmitting a report on the

National Security Strategy of the United States.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 15, 1997.

Remarks on the Budget Agreement and an Exchange With Reporters May 16, 1997

The President. Good morning. Less than 2 weeks ago, the Vice President and I joined with leaders of Congress in announcing a truly historic agreement, a bipartisan agreement to balance the Federal budget for the first time in nearly three decades. We knew that only by finishing the job of putting our fiscal house in order could we keep our economy thriving for all Americans. And I knew that because of all the progress we've made in the last 4½ years, we could balance America's books while protecting America's values and preparing the American people for the 21st century. Last night we took the next significant step toward writing the spirit and substance of that agreement into the law.

I want to begin by thanking Chairman Domenici, Chairman Kasich, Senator Lautenberg, and Congressman Spratt for their hard work and their earnest commitment to sticking with this very difficult process to put our balanced budget agreement in writing. I know from my own negotiating team that we would not be here today without their good faith and good efforts, and I am deeply grateful to them.

I also want to thank the congressional leadership who supported this process. And I'd like to thank the people who are here: the Vice President; Erskine Bowles, who's still a pretty good negotiator even though he's left his beloved private sector; Secretary Rubin; Deputy Secretary Summers; OMB Director Frank Raines; NEC Director Gene Sperling; our CEA Chair, Janet Yellen; and John Hilley, who handles our congressional relations and had one of the most difficult and demanding jobs of his life in the last few weeks; OMB Deputy Director Jack Lew.

I'd like to also thank all the people who are here from OMB, Treasury, and perhaps from other agencies who were the team that put the numbers together, that made this agreement possible. Thank you. You ought to give yourselves a hand. *[Applause]* You did a great job. Thank you.

We have finalized a detailed description of the agreement reached 2 weeks ago. The document is already before the relevant congressional committees who are now moving the balanced budget resolution through the legislative process at an expedited pace. This agreement will keep in place the economic strategy that has served our Nation so well for the last 4½ years.

When I took office, I was determined to reverse the failed policies of the past. Back then, we faced growing deficits as far as the eye could see. It was a time of economic stagnation and high unemployment. We moved quickly in 1993 to put in place a policy of invest and grow: cut the deficit, invest in our people, open new markets around the world through tough trade agreements.

We are now in the 4th year of the disciplined, tough, 5-year economic strategy we put in place in 1993. The results of the strategy are now clear and no longer subject to reasonable debate: 12 million new jobs, the highest economic growth in a decade, the lowest unemployment in 24 years, the lowest inflation in 30 years, the largest decline in income inequality since the 1960's. And the deficit has been cut already by 77 percent. Our economy is now the envy of the world.

That progress has brought us to this rare moment in history and made it possible for us to balance the budget in a way that balances our values. America needs a balanced budget that is in balance with our values, that protects Medicare and Medicaid, education and the environment, that gives tax relief to working families, and that prepares our people for the 21st century. That is exactly what this budget does.

What is important about the agreement is not only what it does on a spreadsheet but what it will do for our families and our future. It keeps our fundamental commitments to our parents, preserving and protecting Medicare for at least a decade, without steep premium increases. Because of this agreement, 5 million American children will have health care who do not have